



The Appian Wayfarer

Cub Scout Pack 134, Annual Pancake Breakfast



This is the Cub Scouts annual fundraiser. Please join them on **Saturday, January 12, 2018 from 8:30am to 11:30am** in Keislar Hall.

The Crafty Ladies Lunch

All Crafty Ladies and Plant room folks are invited to our annual luncheon Jan. 23, 1:00pm, location to be announced. If you have any questions please contact Marilyn Lomelino 510-417-5332.



Women's Retreat

The annual Woman's retreat date has been set! This year the retreat will be held April 26th - 28th at the Ralston White Retreat Center in Mill Valley. More information to follow. If you have any questions, please contact Lisa Dwiggins 510-685-2101



A celebration of the life of Bob Parker will be held at ESUMC on Saturday, January 19, 2019, at 1 pm. Following the celebration a reception will be held at the Richmond Masonic Lodge, 5050 El Portal Drive, Richmond, CA.

Mark's Musings

Putting Herod back into Christmas

This past week I came across a sermon entitled "Putting Herod back into Christmas" written by Joy Carroll Wallis, an Anglican priest, living now with her husband Jim Wallis, editor-in-chief of the journal Sojourners, and their children in Washington, DC. Since the story of the Magi and Herod is the Gospel reading for the feast of the Epiphany, it seemed appropriate to pass it along.

How people love Christmas carols! When I was a priest back in London, carol singing around the parish really seemed to get everyone in the mood for Christmas. We always had a real accordion and an old-fashioned lantern on a pole; we were always wrapped up warmly, and we would stop and sing carols under selected streetlights. It was a scene fit for a Christmas card.... People came out in droves, mostly non-churchgoers, to listen and put money in our collecting box for the homeless. When we were finally all sung out, we would trudge back to someone's house for mulled wine and minced pies...all very English! Great memories. But we need to beware! Our culture loves a sentimental Christmas, and the Christmas carols that we sing are a big part of that. The words often paint an idyllic picture of sanitary bliss that has very little to do with the reality of what Jesus came into this world to do. This week Jim was reading the Christmas story to our son Luke. He read of how Mary and Joseph traveled to Bethlehem on the donkey, that there was no room in the inn. But there was a stable, and, as Jim read, "the stable was warm and clean!" But this sanitization of the Christmas story is a relatively recent development. It's interesting that before the Victorian era, Christmas songs were much more likely to reflect the reality of Jesus' entry into our world. Carols would not hesitate to refer to the blood and sacrifice of Jesus or the story about Herod slaughtering the innocent children. As an example of the contrast, read through the words of "Away in a Manger." Jesus is the perfect baby, and "No crying he makes...." My guess is that Jesus cried a lot. We know from the gospels that the more Jesus saw of the world in which he lived, the more he mourned and wept regularly. A Jesus who doesn't weep with those who weep, a Jesus who's just a

sentimental myth, may be the one that our culture prefers, but that Jesus can do nothing for us. In Britain there's a very popular musician called Cliff Richard. About 10 years ago he released a Christmas song that reached the top 10 in the charts. The lyrics of "Saviour's Day" reflected his Christian faith and included lines such as, "Life can be yours on Saviour's Day, don't look back or turn away...." I picked up a teenage pop magazine where there was an article reviewing the season's Christmas songs. When it came to "Saviour's Day," the writer said, "This song is OK, but there's no holly, no mistletoe and wine, no presents around the tree, no snow, no Santa, in fact this song hasn't got anything to do with Christmas at all!" A radio DJ in this country once said, "What Christmas is all about is the celebration of living in a great nation like this." It's not a celebration of this "great" nation; it's about Jesus Christ. It's so easy to let the world reduce our spirituality to nostalgia and sentiment. As Evangelical Covenant Reverend Dr. Michael Van Horn said, "We must be careful not to lose the connection to the truth of the story because it is that story that shapes our identity as the people of God." Another danger of sentimentality is that we tend to lose interest in the parts of the story that are not so comfortable. We smile at the warm cozy nativity scene, but have you ever spent a night in a barn? Or given birth in a barn? The reality is very different. Most scholars suggest that in Luke's account it's not just that the inns were full but that Mary and Joseph were forced to take the barn because their family had rejected them. Joseph has relatives or friends of relatives in Bethlehem. So rather than being received hospitably by family or friends, Joseph and Mary have been shunned. Family and neighbors are declaring their moral outrage at the fact that Joseph would show up on their doorsteps with his pregnant girlfriend. No sooner have the wise men left the stable than King Herod plots to kill Jesus. He is so determined that he is willing to sacrifice many innocent lives in order to get to this one baby. Herod recognizes something about Jesus that in our sentiment we fail to see: that the birth of this child is a threat to his kingdom, a threat to that kind of domination and rule. Jesus challenges the very power structures of this evil

age. Herod has all the male infants in Bethlehem murdered. Not so cozy. This is the Jesus who entered the bloody history of Israel, and the human race. But we don't want to think about Herod. Van Horn calls him the "Ebenezer Scrooge without the conversion, the Grinch without a change of heart." We Christians like to talk about putting Christ back into Christmas, but let's not forget to put Herod back into Christmas. Herod represents the dark side of the gospel. He reminds us that Jesus didn't enter a world of sparkly Christmas cards or a world of warm spiritual sentiment. Jesus enters a world of real pain, of serious dysfunction, a world of brokenness and political oppression. Jesus was born an outcast, a homeless person, a refugee, and finally he becomes a victim to the powers that be. Jesus is the perfect savior for outcasts, refugees, and nobodies. That's how the church is described in scripture time and time again – not as the best and the brightest – but those who in their weakness become a sign for the world of the wisdom and power of God.

See you in church!
Pastor Mark



Birthdays of the Month

- January 1 - Polly Hancock
- January 6 - Maxine Hilburn
- January 7 - Pam Hancock
Kevin Flagg
- January 8 - Tom Openshaw
Jonathon Bouchard
- January 10 - Viola Wessman
- January 11 - Lisa Steiner
Ken Woodson
Pat Storer,
- January 12 – Karen Jarrell
- January 13 - Max Richardson
- January 17 - Brent Mason
- January 17 - Chris Hawkins
- January 21 - Brennan Taft
- January 25 - Hansen Rahmgren
Rebecca Slessinger,
- January 26 - Pam Richardson
Charlene Kafer
- January 28 - Demetrius Christopher Arnold (Hawkins)
- January 27 - Greg Webber
- January 30 – Shirley Phillips
- January 31 - Bria Kille Cartwright
Daniella Slessinger



ESUMC Treasurer's Report

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|---------|--------------|
| Income | \$251,337.15 |
| Expense | \$248,510.19 |
| Surplus | 2,828.96 |

Monthly Meetings

for December:

- ~~Worship Com.~~ - Sun., 9, 7:00 PM, OR
- ~~Ad Council~~ - Sun., 16, 12:30 PM, KH

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|---|---|--|--|---|---|
| <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; width: fit-content; margin: auto;"> <h2 style="margin: 0;">January 2019 Calendar</h2> </div> | | <p>1 New Year's Day</p> | <p>2 10 AM Bible Study, R1 11:30 AM Motion Class, KH 1 PM B&G Club, KH & FR 7 PM AI Anon, FR 7 PM Alateen, R1 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal, C</p> | <p>3 6 PM Yoga, R1 7:30 PM Kairos, S 7:30 PM Photo Club, R1</p> | <p>4 10 AM Motion Class, KH</p> | <p>5</p> |
| | | <p>6 10 AM Worship, S 11:30AM Fellowship</p> | <p>7 2 PM B&G Club, KH & FR 7 PM Handbells, S</p> | <p>8 10 AM Painting Group, R1 2 PM B&G Club, KH & FR 4 PM Faith Exploration 6:30 PM Yoga, R1 7 PM Boy Scouts, KH 7:30 PM Kairos R., S</p> | <p>9 10 AM Bible Study, R1 11:30 AM Motion Class, KH 1 PM B&G Club, KH & FR 7 PM AI Anon, FR 7 PM Alateen, R1 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal, C</p> | <p>10 2 PM B&G Club, FR & KH 6 PM Yoga, R1</p> |
| <p>13 10 AM Worship, S 11:30AM Fellowship 7 PM Worship Committee, OR</p> | <p>14 2 PM B&G Club, KH & FR 7 PM Handbells, S</p> | <p>15 10 AM Painting Group, R1 2 PM B&G Club, KH & FR 4 PM Faith Exploration 6:30 PM Yoga, R1 7 PM Boy Scouts, KH 7:30 PM Kairos R., S 730 PM Cub Scouts, FR</p> | <p>16 10 AM Bible Study, R1 11:30 AM Motion Class, KH 1 PM B&G Club, KH & FR 7 PM AI Anon, FR 7 PM Alateen, R1 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal, C</p> | <p>17 2 PM B&G Club, FR & KH 6 PM Yoga, R1 7:30 PM Photo Club, R1</p> | <p>18 10 AM Motion Class, KH 10:30 AM GRIP (off site) 1 PM B&G Club, FR & KH 6:30 PM EBARC, R1</p> | <p>19 12 PM Parker Memorial, S</p> |
| <p>20 10 AM Worship, S 11:30AM Fellowship 1 PM Plenary Ad. Council, FR</p> | <p>21 2 PM B&G Club, KH & FR 7 PM Handbells, S</p> | <p>22 10 AM Painting Group, R1 2 PM B&G Club, KH & FR 4 PM Faith Exploration 6:30 PM Yoga, R1 7 PM Boy Scouts, KH 7:30 PM Kairos R., S</p> | <p>23 10 AM Bible Study, R1 11:30 AM Motion Class, KH 1 PM Crafty Ladies Lunch (off site) 1 PM B&G Club, KH & FR 7 PM AI Anon, FR 7 PM Alateen, R1 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal, C</p> | <p>24 2 PM B&G Club, FR & KH 6 PM Yoga, R1</p> | <p>25 10 AM Motion Class, KH 2 PM B&G Club, FR & KH 6:30 PM EBARC, R1</p> | <p>26</p> |
| <p>27 10 AM Worship, S 11:30AM Fellowship</p> | <p>28 2 PM B&G Club, KH & FR 7 PM Handbells, S</p> | <p>29 10 AM Painting Group, R1 2 PM B&G Club, KH & FR 4 PM Faith Exploration 6:30 PM Yoga, R1 7 PM Boy Scouts, KH 7:30 PM Kairos R., S</p> | <p>30 10 AM Bible Study, R1 11:30 AM Motion Class, KH 1 PM Crafty Ladies, R1 1 PM B&G Club, KH & FR 7 PM AI Anon, FR 7 PM Alateen, R1 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal, C</p> | <p>31 2 PM B&G Club, FR & KH 6 PM Yoga, R1</p> | | |

Prayer Concerns Family of Bob Parker, Darlene Flemming, Family of Valerie Kleinfeld, Cliff Kearsley (Frank Kafer's brother-in-law) Ellen Donnelly (daughter of friend of Kafer's), Family of Sam Emmanuel, Family of Noreen Tipton, Flor Sancez & her mother (Karen Jarrell's colleague), Wendy Allen, Bill Slessinger, family of Dorothy Williams, Charlene Kafer, Betty Staley, Rachael Keltch (second cousin of Suzie Arnhart, a friend of Kafers), Lee Hunt, Edna Luffey, Marge Dean, Leota Merrithew, Karin Shuttlesworth, Gina Ledesma and her family (colleague of Karen Jarrell), Gary Stearns, family of Teresa Morin Stanton (friend of Lee Hunt), Sherry Banks, Victor Nozzolillo, the Fleming family (Steve, Denise Roby, & Michael), Lauren Kelly and Linda Goodman (nieces of Darlene), Gary Spearie (Paula Hammond's brother), those who continue to be impacted by natural disasters.

Wayfarer
January 2019 issue

El Sobrante United Methodist Church
670 Appian Way, El Sobrante, CA 94803



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Resident Bishop, Minerva Carcaño
District Superintendent, Schuyler Rhodes
Pastor, Mark A. Zier
Director of Music, Eileen M. Johnson
Lay Minister, Jacqueline Corl-Seidel
Lay Minister, Charlene Kafer
Treasurer, Marilyn Lomelino
Office, Erika Cortez

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